



Department of Justice

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MONTANA MAN SENTENCED FOR RECEIPT AND POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

BILLINGS – Richard Drost, a 29-year-old resident of Great Falls, was sentenced today to a term of 168 months in federal prison in connection with his guilty plea to receipt and possession of child pornography. Drost was also ordered to pay a special assessment of \$200 and will be under supervision for life.

In an Offer of Proof filed by the United States, the government stated it would have proved at trial the following:

In December of 2006, the Great Falls Police Department received a report that Drost had what appeared to be child pornography in his possession via a computer. Drost's roommate in Great Falls reported that she had observed Drost in front of the computer masturbating, holding a pair of the roommate's panties and watching a movie which appeared to depict a female child engaged in sexual activity with a dog.

When interviewed, Drost admitted that he had a juvenile history of sexual offenses against children, including offenses while he was in sexual offender treatment. Drost admitted that he used a peer-to-peer program to search out movies, and that some of the movies depicted children engaged in sexually explicit activity. Drost also admitted that he had an interest in child pornography movies and had downloaded more of them than adult pornography movies. Drost further admitted that he knew it was illegal to download and possess child pornography. Drost also admitted to the conduct described by the roommate to the Great Falls Police Department.

The computers used by Drost were seized and analyzed for the presence of child pornography. Numerous movies were found, including those with titles and descriptions specifically mentioned by Drost as being child pornography. Some of the movies are difficult to determine the age of the child involved, but Drost took a substantial step towards the receipt and possession of child pornography and believed the images to be those of children, including a thirteen-year old girl.

The investigation was conducted by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Assistant United States Attorney Marcia K. Hurd prosecuted the case.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, the Department of Justice launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys' Offices, Project Safe Childhood

marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

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